

National Family Caregiver Support Program Resources

Transportation Tips for Caregivers



Introduction

Transportation is an issue that is vital to the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers. When physical and cognitive impairments prevent older adults from driving or using public transportation, caregivers often become primary transportation providers. Unfortunately, providing transportation can be a stressful and time-consuming caregiving task. The following tips are for caregivers to consider when either transporting or arranging transportation for their loved ones.

Considerations For Arranging Transportation

If you are a caregiver in search of transportation for an older family member or friend, you may want to consider the following questions before deciding on a transportation option. Use these questions to gather more detailed information from the transportation provider you are considering in order to choose the best option for your loved one.



- What is the service area?
- Is there a limitation on distance?
- How much will the service cost?
- Will insurance pay for rides provided by the service?
- Are there requirements to qualify for the service? If so, what are they?
- Is there an evaluation that must take place prior to the first ride?
- Is there a membership fee that must be paid before scheduling rides with the service?
- How far in advance must reservations be made?
- Are rides provided in the evenings, on weekends or on holidays?
- Are rides provided to social as well as medical or shopping appointments?
- Are door-through-door, door-to-door or curb-to-curb services provided?
- Are rides provided to people who use wheelchairs?
- Do riders stay in their wheelchair, or are they transferred to a seat during the ride?
- Is there an escort or attendant in the vehicle with the driver?
- Does someone stay with my family member during appointments?
- Can a family member serve as an escort? If so, is there an extra cost associated?
- Will there be a wait when picked up from home? If so, how long?
- Will there be a wait when picked up for the return trip? If so, how long?
- Will the driver or attendant come into the office/building for the return trip?
- Will other passengers be riding? If so, what is the maximum length of time of the ride while others are being picked-up/dropped-off?

Transporting A Loved One With Dementia

When impairments resulting from Alzheimer's disease and related dementias prevent older adults from safely driving or using public transportation, caregivers often become primary transportation providers. Transporting your loved one can be a challenge, but does not have to be a struggle every time. Try to keep in mind the advice given by a long-time caregiver, "The slower you go, the faster things get done."

- Be patient and allow time to get ready and get into the car.
- Try to allow your loved one to calm down before entering the car.
- Be prepared with relaxing music, sunglasses, photos, food, etc.
- Seat your loved one in the rear passenger side seat with seat belt on and child lock in the 'on' position.
- Encourage your loved one to do as much as possible for him/herself.
- Try to keep glare from the sun to a minimum.
- Give information in small bits.
- Stay calm.
- Validate your loved one's feelings whenever possible.
- Give brief, step-by-step directions.
- Encourage reminiscence.
- Be aware of your body language.
- Ask your loved one to use the bathroom before getting into the car.
- If possible, have a cellular phone in the car in case of emergency.

Additional Transportation Resources

Easter Seals: Transportation Solutions for Caregivers: Provides tools and resources to improve transportation for older adults.

www.easterseals.com/ntl_trans_care

Community Transportation Association: Provides a host of resources on senior transportation.

http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/senior_publications.asp

When You Are Concerned: New York Office for the Aging: A handbook for caregivers on driving safety.

<http://aging.state.ny.us/caring/concerned/index.htm>

The Hartford® Family Conversations with Older Drivers: Safe Driving for a Lifetime. Provides a handbook and resources for families and older drivers.

<http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/index.htm>

Hartford/MIT At the Crossroads: A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving

www.thehartford.com/alzheimers

Mini-Self Assessment of Driving Ability – Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging:

<http://aging.cpaaa.org/forms/Driving%20Self%20Assessment.pdf>

Information provide in this fact sheet was adapted from materials submitted by Easter Seals, Chicago, IL. For more information, visit their website at www.easterseals.com.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; phone: (202) 401-4541; fax (202) 357-3560; Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov; or contact our website at: www.aoa.gov